

Friis, John

From: Michelle Johnson [livingxfairytale@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, March 15, 2009 2:15 PM
To: Friis, John
Subject: HB6666, Section 5

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to strongly advocate for Section 5 of House Bill HB6666, which will allow for adjunct faculty certificates to be issued to the highly-trained professional artists, who serve as ECA's part-time faculty, to continue their 35-year record of preparing Connecticut's high school students for our competitive global economy. If they are required to become certified for 12-hour per week part-time positions, they will not be able to do so and the school will close. This will be a terrible loss to Connecticut's high school students in 19 school districts.

My name is Michelle Johnson, Im a freshman at Amity High School, and I go to ECA for theater. Ive wanted to come to ECA since my sister started going, and the school had always seemed like this dream, where the teachers and students were all completely dedicated to the arts. When I was fortunate to get into ECA, I found this was true. Probably what I love most about ECA is the people that go there, the people who are all amazing and expressive simply because ECA creates an environment for them to develop these personalities. I feel myself being strengthened by this place. The mantra of the theater department is TAKE RISKS. Simply stated, but hard to fulfill. Just by trying to live by this saying has been the best advice Ive ever gotten. The teachers themselves not only teach you about all theyve learned in their professional lives, but a lot about what theyve learned in their lives in general. Ideas and inspirations such as small anecdotes about their daily life, or of their experiences as a young artist are the most valuable part of what they give us. To me, the teachers arent just academic scholars, telling you information to learn from, they are mentors. Mentors that share with you their take on life and art, and help you through your specific needs. Probably the best thing about these people is that they are willing to learn from the students themselves. The teacher-student dynamic is such that the adults treat the students like young artists, and encourage them to learn from each other as well as themselves.

As an artist, I know that Im young, inexperienced, and could use some direction. What is incredible about ECA is that the teachers lend you wisdom to make good choices, but ultimately, you end up depending on yourself. You have to take that risk and rely on yourself to make decisions that might fail, but also might succeed. This, for me, is that hardest part of life, because, as a high school student, Im used to relying on academic teachers to dictate what I do and how to do it. The teachers at ECA are the true spirit of the school, and give their students this unique experience. This new freedom to make my own choices is scarier than anything else. But it has already changed me. It changed my personality, it altered and refined my acting abilities, and it changed how I view myself, all for the better-all because of the ECA environment. I cant convey how deeply this school has touched me in all aspects of myself. I am part of it, and it is part of my life. Please dont take it away from me.

Sincerely,
Michelle Johnson
ECA Theater Department, '12